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ART IN SCHOOLS.

GEORGE LOWELL AUSTIN.

THE editor of THE ART REVIEW has cordially requested me to furnish a few hints relative to art in our schools. I know of no subject more deserving of attention on the part of our citizens; and while pondering over the subject, it has presented itself to my mind under two distinct heads. First, art as a means of decoration, and its moral influence; second, its study by youth. Of the former, I propose to speak in this paper.

It is a sad sight to go into a school-room,—a place intended to be the great educator of our children,—and there see nothing save a table, desks, and a long series of black-boards, the latter wofully covered, from top to bottom, with those abominable but useful symbols of the sciences. I have often thought that it is no wonder that youth, looking out from the windows, upon green fields, and crowded streets, upon blooming nature or active life, long to burst the narrow confines of their imprisonment. It is a sorry sight, too, to behold a teacher perched upon his royal seat, like a Jupiter among the lesser gods, enjoying the firm conviction that he is placed there to rule and instruct, having a care that in the former duty he must be "dignified, you know!" and that, in the latter, he must confine his instruction to the studies set down in the catalogue. When I go into a school-room, I am sometimes reminded of a manufactory; the teacher appears to be the motive power, working through the agency of those little, wonderful machines, nominally called boys and girls. After the morning bell has rung, you may see every thing in working order, and success depends, perhaps, upon the frequent use of the oil of birch.

Now, this may all be very well, provided you look upon your children as so many cattle to be herded into a barn-like place; but not well, if you have a care for their future welfare and refinement.

If you wish to so mould their natural dispositions that their characters may prove good and honest, be sure no mere scholastic learning will do it. There may be education without refinement; but there can be no refinement without education. The latter is the foundation of human progress; the former is what polishes the substance, and makes the way smooth.

It is not the mere planting of the seed, and watering it, that causes it to grow; there is another influence working upon it,—an influence kind and genial, and emanating from above. Likewise, it is not the branches, studied and recited in the school-room, that make the scholar. There must be another influence brought to bear—a love of the beautiful, either in nature or in man. That alone refines, that nourishes a noble ambition, that makes the man. Yes, it is art, with its glory, its presence, its revelations, its sacred memories, and its study, that inspires us with a love of the Creator.

Teachers—there is something else in a picture

besides lines, lights and colors! There is a language hid beneath the surface, that should speak and exert a moral influence. Pictures are as great educators as yourselves,—they polish and refine the work that you have laid, only as a foundation.

Do you realize this? Perhaps you have, at home, your portfolios, your paintings, and your favorite works on art; did you ever for once imagine how cheerful your school-room might be made to appear, were you to hang a few of those pictures, or copies, upon the walls? How much you might benefit those young minds under your charge, were you to tell them something of art, were you to teach them, in a familiar manner, some of its mysteries and wonders, and thereby lessen the severe burden of their other studies, and inspire them with a pure love, a noble ambition, and a patient hope!

A beautiful picture exerts a refining influence. Children always like to see them,—they see them

all women as ladies. You will never find a thief with a rose bud in his button-hole; you will never find a murderer a lover of the beautiful. (If the latter, the courts would be sure to bring in a plea for insanity.) As the mind is good and true, so will it reflect those qualities upon other minds, and will be touched and spoken to by art. A glance of the eye often teaches a child more than volumes of books would do. Such teaching is long-lived. There is a deal of truth in the maxim—"seeing is believing." Children will smile in the expression given by a picture; it speaks always in the same beautiful tone, and is never out of temper.

Require, then, teachers, to cultivate taste and art by procuring pictures, that will convey some idea of beauty, of nobleness, of virtue, and of endurance.

Finally, a few words as to the selection of scenes for the school-room. For younger pupils, your own good taste will discriminate between the simple and the classical. Choose pictures of childhood, of common every day scenes, studies of character, and the beauties of nature.

I cannot emphasize too strongly the necessity of placing pictures in our higher schools,—pictures that shall have a storied meaning as well as an artistic expression. There are so many subjects to choose from, that my few suggestions will probably be of little use. A good teacher will *feel* what is wanted, and know how to provide. Owing to their cost, paintings, of course, should not be sought for, as a general thing. Yet, there are many paintings cheaper than steel-engraving. Such I would advise you to hang in the stable,—no where else. Chromos look pretty in a school-room, and the wonderful perfection to which they have reached, warrant close attention. Even in our homes and galleries, I am glad to see the best of them hanging side by side with the paintings. Their influence, as a general thing, is good, and they are just what the people want and should have. For the school, allow me to suggest, the "Reading Magdalene" after Correggio; and the "Family Scene in Pompeii," two of the finest, and most artistic chromos I have ever seen. Also several of the landscapes, and

one or two floral and fruit pieces—for the latter are pleasant reminders of the gentler seasons.

By all means select a few subjects from classical art, pieces by the great masters, perhaps one of each, so as to associate their names and labors in all minds. The above can usually be found in lithographs or engravings, at a comparatively small price. If you can afford it—and every public-school board ought to afford it—select a Rose Bonheur or a small Landseer, a Foster or a Rowbotham, and at least one Turner, and do not forget, I pray you, American artists and scenes, for many of these are meritorious. Choose a

* I am aware that it is hardly orthodox to doubt Mr. Ruskin's authority, in questions of art, but still I do, and after close and careful reading of his writings, I always feel that they are more nice than wise. He evidently writes for artists—for no one else. His last "Lectures on Art" I hold to be a good exception.



WALLACE AND KIRKPATRICK.—F. O. C. Darley.

at home. Why not in school, which *should be* home only under another name? You remember how the Greeks loved beauty; and nothing was concealed that could enhance it. Artists, in those days, labored for immortality; their ambition was above mere mercenary considerations. Art was even consecrated to the gods. Much that might seem ideal to us was natural among them, and to this fact must be attributed all the glory, refinement and intellect of the ancient Greeks.

And to-day, even as you would prune and direct the growth of a young sapling in the hope of seeing a well-formed tree, so must you seek to refine the mind of youth in order to produce noble and hardy manhood. Refinement is only a name for the love of the beautiful. I would no sooner think of calling a man, without that love, a scholar, than I would consider all men as gentlemen, and

Washington" or a "Franklin" or any eminent historical character you wish. Again, let me beg of you, teachers, to hold with your pupils frequent and pleasing conversations on reference to the art represented. Brief lectures will find to be of incalculable advantage; you will be loved, and your pupils will gather closely around you. Do your best, your duty, and success be with you. Happy will be the day when sines and cosines, planets, and imperial boundaries shall be taught, side by side, with Raphael and the great schools of art, present and past.

AN IOWA INSTITUTION.

ROLLO RAMBLER.

A GOOD night's rest distant from Chicago,—in a Pullman palace car, upon the Northwestern railway,—is the beautiful town of Mt. Vernon, Iowa, occupying a commanding eminence, than which there is not another so charming a spot in all the numerous expanse of the wonderful Hawkeye State. It is, indeed, "a city set upon a hill," and the spark of light that was kindled by "father" Bowman fifteen years ago, has become a flame which can never be hidden nor quenched; a shrine at whose altar six thousand of Iowa's brave sons and fair daughters have bowed, to receive a higher education of head and heart that should best fit them for noble manhood and lovely womanhood; an *alma mater* of "the good, the true, and the beautiful;" a Mecca for the after-ages, only less sacred than the birth-place home. That Cornell College is appreciated and loved and only attend its annual Commencement are convinced; and it will well repay a long trip with only this one object in view. "All commencements are alike," you may tell me. At this one is *not* "alike." If you had been so fortunate as to have been there with me on the eventful June day of the present year, you would have fully agreed with Rev. Dr. Fowler, of Chicago, who, in one of his happy impromptu talks, characterized the occasion as "a cross between the 'fourth' of July and a Methodist camp-meeting!" It is, *par excellence*, the holiday of the entire year, the literal "fourth" in enthusiasm, all the region round about, which sends its men and women, boys and girls, with a delegation of long-lunged babies, by every imaginable conveyance, from the luxurious cars of the famous Northwestern railway, and the stylish city turn-out, to the farm wagon and mule team. Gathering, as they do, by thousands, there is no hall nor church that can seat a tithe of them, nor any place so appropriate, so beautifully befitting the occasion, as God's great temple of forest trees, whose over-arching limbs and wide-spread branches combine needful shelter with rare beauty; only the grand Architect of nature has ever brought out. And here, year by year, after a thorough course in all the branches of education that experience has demonstrated to be the most desirable, with all the facilities and appliances of American progress has at once demanded to be applied, come the men and women of the new generation of thinkers and doers, to shake the well hands with their faithful teacher and their best friend, President King,—a man of a thousand for such a place,—to bid adieu to old

schoolmates, old associations, and old friends, and here, in the hallowed wood of their College campus, commence, in very deed, the broader life that comes to all when men, rather than the works set down in the curriculum, become the textbooks.

Cornell College is a power in the truest growth and best development of the Northwest,—a power, the influence of which is, year by year, widening and extending with gratifying rapidity. It is now upon a firmer basis than ever before, and while the necessity for further endowments still affords opportunities for the large-hearted men—and women—of wealth, it can hardly be predicted to what rank this College may not attain in the grand galaxy of American educational institutions. It will be enough for its friends,—who are not limited to the State that is rightly proud of its location within her borders,—if its influence for complementing the best that books can yield, by the higher good of heart-education, shall increase proportionately with its rapid material growth and prosperity.

AMERICAN ART NEWS.

BOSTON.

George L. Brown has just finished the first really fiery Italian scene he has taken from his easel for a long time, having of late busied himself mostly with moonlights and the more sober noonday effects. His last work is a view of the castle of Ischia, with Capri in the distance. The sun is setting behind the old castle, seeming to illuminate every square inch of the sensuous atmosphere, and burnishing the surrounding clouds with a glowing effulgence that will doubtless raise the ire of those critical Don Quixotes who have the hatred of a Spanish bull or a New England turkey-cock towards anything fiery. But the wonderful, striking part of the picture is found in the Claude-like depth and tenderness with which he has clothed the atmosphere, every particle of which is luminous with radiance. There is a stirring history connected with this castle, but I will forbear inflicting your readers with it. Mr. Brown has also begun two or three other scenes, one of which is a Venetian moonlight. He has for some time been intending to send a picture to Philadelphia, and possibly one to Chicago; but as yet he has not been able to do so, his New England admirers purchasing as fast as he finishes them.

Mr. Wight, whose "Eve at the Fountain" attained such celebrity, but whose greatest *forte* seems to be in those charming interiors he finishes so beautifully, and of which there is such a dearth in American art, is at work on a kitchen interior, which he will have finished late in the summer or early in the fall. He calls it "Pet's First Cake," and it represents a little five-year-old girl, immaculately arrayed in blue dress, with her golden hair flowing about her shoulders, standing in a chair at the table, with her sleeves rolled up, and up to her elbows in the mysteries of dough. She is receiving the instructions of a huge black negress, whose patronizing air is charmingly rendered. The parlor-maid, with her peacock-tail brush, is pausing in her passage through the kitchen to see the progress, and the mother is

looking in at the door. The bouquet of flowers in the window, and the charming glimpse of landscape outside, with the kitten playing on the floor, and the neglected dolls lying around, added to the main figures, all go to make up a very effective scene. Mr. Wight is also engaged upon a semi-nude scene, taken from William Morris's "Earthly Paradise," published in this country by Roberts Brothers, which promises to be a fine thing.

George E. Niles, our charming *genre* painter, has made a bold stride out into landscape art, and one which is bringing him golden opinions, and will add much to his reputation. It is a scene in the Adirondacks; and Rev. Mr. Murray, Boston's patron saint in that quarter, has, among others, pronounced glowingly on its merits. It is a view of the upper Ausabee lake and outlying mountains, with glimpses of blue sky between the masses of cloud rolling overhead, and of immense distances seen beyond mountains that stand out boldly from the canvas, which some of our more pretentious artists would do well to equal.

Thomas R. Gould, of "West Wind" fame, has taken a studio here for a short time, and is busy filling several orders for portrait-busts.

S. L. Gerry has just taken from his easel a more pretentious picture than he usually indulges in. Its coloring and composition are very fine, and as an ideal landscape of oriental sensuousness, it is well conceived and executed; but when he professes to call it "Over the River," and transfer the part of the picture beyond the river flowing tranquilly through the foreground, into the world beyond the shores of time, the picture will suffer.

F. H. Shapleigh, who has recently returned from California, has already filled three orders brought with him from San Francisco for California scenes. Two are views in the Yosemite, and the other in the Hetch-Hetchy valley. The latter is the best of the three pictures, and San Francisco may well be proud to have in her parlors such creditable specimens of Boston art.

EARL MARBLE.

BALTIMORE.

Fancy a triangle, at the apex of which shall be a busy, buzzing, active bee; at one of the angles of the base a lively, squirming centipede, and at the other a gross and sluggish snail—then have you neatly symbolized the relative conditions of art in Chicago, New York, and Baltimore. For a city of our size, presumptive culture, intelligence and wealth, we are lamentably deficient as regards art progress; and although we live in hope, and daily eat the bread of expectation, yet we cannot say that we see aught indicative of change, except for the worse. The winter has been terribly dull, and the profits of spring have barely paid up its absolute deficiencies. The few artists whom patriotism or necessity have prompted to remain in Baltimore, have struggled manfully through both seasons, but if they be discouraged at the summer outlook, it is no one's province to blame them. People here do not seem inclined to encourage progress in local art circles. If artists get up a neat and tasteful reception, and issue to the elect gilt-edged and decorous cards of invitation, they